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TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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AFDROUGHT

OTTAWA FOR HIGGINS; ROME FOR FODAG

FOLLOWING REPEAT NOUAKCHOTT 924 SENT ACTION SECSTATE

INFO BAMAKO EMBRUSSLS BONN DAKAR PARIS ROME USUN NEW YORK

JUL 13TH.

QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NOUAKCHOTT 924

AFDROUGHT

EO 11652: NA

SUBJECT: SAHEL DROUGHT: MAURITANIA AIRLIFT NEEDS

SUMMARY: MINHEALTH OULD BAH (GIRM DROUGHT RELIEF COORDINATOR)
HAS NOTIFIED ALL DONORS THAT HE EXPECTS MAKE FORMAL REQUEST FOR
EMERGENCY FOOD AIRLIFT BEGINNING ABOUT MID-AUGUST FOR FIRST,
SECOND AND THIRD REGIONS. ACCORDING OUR BEST ESTIMATES, THESE
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REGIONS WILL NEED MINIMUM 8,000 MT GRAIN CARRY POPULATION THROUGH

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER WHEN OVERLAND COMMUNICATION WASHED OUT BY RAINS. THIS FIGURE WILL BE VALIDATED/UPDATED WHEN MINHEALTH RETURNS FROM TRIP TO FIRST REGIONS END OF NEXT WEEK. BECAUSE OF TRUCK SHORTAGES AND LATE ARRIVAL SOME DONOR CEREALS, GIRM HAS NOT BEEN ABLE BUILD UP RAINY SEASON STOCKS IN FIRST THREE REGIONS. RECOMMEND, THEREFORE, THAT AID/W CONSIDER ASSIGNING THREE USAF C-130S NOW IN MALI TO TRANSPORT GRAIN FROM BAMAKO TO NEMA, AIOUN AND KIFFA FOLLOWING END MALI AIRLIFT. ESTIMATE THREE C-130S COULD LIFT 4000 MT IN 40 DAYS PROVIDED GOM WILLING LEND THIS AMOUNT TO GIRM FOR LATER REPLACEMENT FROM MAURITANIAN STOCKS DAKAR. OTHER DONORS (FRG, FRANCE, SPAIN, OSRO, ETC) SHOULD BE APPROACHED RE AIRLIFT REMAINING 4,000 MT NECESSARY CA
Y POPULATION THROUGH RAINS.

1. AS REPORTED NOUAKCHOTT 869, GIRM HAS ASSIGNED ABOUT HALF (110) ITS AVAILABLE 10-TON TRUCKS TRANSPORT GRAIN FROM ROSSO-NOUAKCHOTT INTO ISOLATED FIRST THREE REGIONS. THESE TRUCKS CAN AT BEST TRANSPORT ONLY ABOUT 2800 MT PER MONTH, WHICH FALLS SHORT OF TOTAL CURRENT CONSUMPTION NEEDS ESTIMATED AT 4000 MT PER MONTH FOR THE THREE REGIONS. TRUCK CONVOY TURNAROUND TIMES TO FIRST REGION(NEMA) AVERAGE 15 DAYS UNDER DRY SEASON CONDITIONS, WHILE THOSE TO KIFFA AIOUN AVERAGE 10 DAYS. MINHEALTH WOULD BE PREPARED ASSIGN ADDITIONAL TRUCKS TO THESE ROUTES, BUT CANNOT DO SO IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE HE IS FACED WITH NECESSITY EVACUATE PRIOR BEGINNING RAINS 15,000 MT PL-480 GRAIN OPEN-STORED AT ROSSO. WITH RAINS ALREADY BEGINNING FALL IN SOUTHEASTERN MAURITANIA, TURN-AROUND TIMES NOTED ABOVE WILL LENGTHEN FROM NOW ON UNTIL, IN MID-AUGUST OVERLAND ACCESS INTO FIRST THREE REGIONS WILL VIRTUALLY CEASE UNTIL LATE OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER. A FEW CONVOYS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GET THROUGH TO THESE MOST ISOLATED REGIONS, BUT COULD NOT SUPPLY EVEN A FRACTION OF CURRENT CONSUMPTION NEEDS FROM AUGUST 15 THROUGH OCTOBER 15.

2. MINHEALTH ESTIMATES MINIMUM NEEDS FOR FIRST THREE REGIONS AT 4,000 MT PER MONTH DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

REGION	POPULATION	MINIMUM MT P/MONTH
FIRST (NEMA)	200,000	1,500

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SECOND (AIOUN)	120,000	1,000
THIRD (KIFFA)	200,000	1,500

ABOVE WOULD PROVIDE BARE MINIMUM CONSUMPTION REQUIREMENTS AVERAGING SEVEN TO EIGHT KILOS PER PERSON PER MONTH. AT PRESENT, GIRM'S OVER-WORKED TRUCK FLEET IS SUPPLYING EVEN LESS THAN THIS MINIMUM AMOUNT TO FIRST THREE REGIONS. ACCORDING MINHEALTH'S FIGURES FIRST REGION IS GETTING ONLY 1,000 MT PER MONTH, AND

SECOND AND THIRD ONLY 900 MT PER MONTH. MOREOVER, GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN UNABLE BECAUSE OF TRUCK SHORTAGES AND LATE ARRIVAL SOME DONOR CEREALS TO BUILD UP BUFFER STOCKS CARRY POPULATION IN THESE MOST ISOLATED REGIONS THROUGH RAINS WHEN OVERLAND TRANSPORT BECOMES VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. ACCORDING TO MINHEALTH, ALL GRAIN ARRIVING FIRST THREE REGIONS IS BEING DISTRIBUTED IMMEDIATELY TO MEET CURRENT CONSUMPTION NEEDS, LEAVING NO EXCESS FOR RESERVE STOCKS.

3. GIRM IS ALSO FACED WITH INTRA-REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS. UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, ALL BUT A HANDFUL OF LIGHTER GIRM TRUCKS ARE CONCENTRATED ON TRANSPORT EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES FROM ROSSO-NOUAKCHOTT TO REGIONAL CAPITALS. TRANSPORT FOOD FROM REGIONAL CAPITALS TO SMALLER TOWNS AND TO NOMADIC CAMPS DEPENDENT ALMOST ENTIRELY UPON LOCAL COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT OR UPON HANDFUL GIRM TRUCKS ASSIGNED TO SOME REGIONAL GOVERNORS. WE INTEND PURSUE THIS PROBLEM WITH MINHEALTH AND, IF AIRLIFT BECOMES DEFINITE POSSIBILITY, RECOMMEND HE STATION ADDITIONAL TRUCKS IN FIRST THREE REGIONS WELL IN ADVANCE OF HEAVIEST RAINS TO ASSURE INTRA-REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION AIRLIFTED FOOD.

4. IN VIEW PREVIOUS YEARS' EXPERIENCE, WE ARE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE FOOD SHORTAGES IN REMAINING SOUTHERN MAURITANIAN REGIONS (FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH). TRACKS TO AND IN THESE REGIONS REMAIN OPEN TO HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC WITH ONLY BRIEF INTERRUPTIONS THROUGHOUT THE RAINY SEASON. MINHEALTH IS ALREADY MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR BARGE GRAIN TRANSPORT TO RIVERSIDE TOWNS SUCH AS BOGUE AND KAEDI ONCE SENEGAL RIVER FLOOD CRESTS. MOREOVER, RESERVE STOCKS ARE BEING RAPIDLY BUILT UP IN FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH REGIONS AS RESULT ACCELERATED EVACUATION PL-480 GRAIN FROM ROSSO (SEPTTEL).

5. ACTION REQUESTED: IN LIGHT ALL ABOVE, AM PERSUADED THAT WE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOULD BEGIN NOW TO PLAN IN CONJUNCTION WITH FAO/OSRO AND OTHER DONORS TO MOVE BEGINNING MID-AUGUST AIRLIFT ENOUGH GRAIN CARRY THREATENED POPULATION IN FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD REGIONS THROUGH SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER UNTIL 1) HARVEST BEGINS COME IN AND 2) TRACKS ONCE AGAIN OPEN TO TRUCK TRANSPORT. AIRLIFT SHOULD BE TARGETED AT SUPPLYING MINIMUM 8,000 MT NEEDED CARRY POPULATION THROUGH TWO MONTHS AS FOLLOWS: NEMA 3,000 MT; AIOUN 1,000 MT; AND KIFFA 3,000 MT WITH PERHAPS SMALL PORTION LATTER TONNAGE LIFTED DIRECT TO SELIBABY.

6. OUR ESTIMATES BASED ON LAST YEAR'S AIRLIFT EXPERIENCE INDICATE THAT THREE OPERABLE BAMAKO-BASED C-130S COULD LIFT 4,000 MT OR ONE-HALF TOTAL MINIMUM NEEDS IN 40 DAYS ALLOWING FOR DOWN TIME AND CREW REST. OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE WOULD BE GOM WILLINGNESS LEND GIRM THIS AMOUNT GRAIN FOR LATER REPLACEMENT FROM MAURITANIAN STOCKS DAKAR. (WE WOULD ALSO EXPECT SOME NOT INSURMOUNTABLE

DIPLOMATIC PROBLEMS IN CONVINCING GIRM TO FORMALLY REQUEST THAT ITS DROUGHT-STRICKEN NEIGHBOR LEND THIS GRAIN. COULD POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT SIMILAR BILATERAL AGREEMENT WAS WORKED OUT LAST YEAR WITH ONLY MINOR DIFFICULTIES.) OTHERWISE, AIRLIFT WOULD BY NECESSITY ORIGINATE AT NOUAKCHOTT, WHICH WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE FLYING TIME AND THEREFORE COSTS. ALTERNATIVELY, WE COULD BASE AIRLIFT AT DAKAR, WHICH IS EVEN FARTHER AWAY FROM THREATENED ZONE, BUT HAS THE ADVANTAGES OF GOOD REPAIR AND LOGISTICS FACILITIES LACKING AT NOUAKCHOTT. IN SUM, HOWEVER, IT WOULD SEEM MOST LOGICAL TO MOUNT ANY USAF AIRLIFT OUT OF BAMAKO GIVEN THAT REPAIR, REFUELING AND HOUSING FACILITIES ALREADY SET UP THERE.

7. RECOMMEND THAT EMBASSY BAMAKO BE AUTHORIZED INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOM FOR LOAN 4,000 MT GRAIN TO MAURITANIA AND USE AIRPORT AND OTHER FACILITIES FOR MAURITANIA AIRLIFT. ALSO RECOMMEND WE APPROACH OTHER POTENTIAL AIRLIFT DONORS WITH PROPOSAL THEY PROVIDE AIRLIFT FOR REMAINING 4,000 MT DEFICIT IN FIRST THREE REGIONS. RECOMMENDATIONS RE ACTION WE AND OTHER DONORS SHOULD TAKE TO AVOID ANOTHER AIRLIFT NEXT YEAR FOLLOW BY SEPTTEL.
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